

GUIDE

Official Publication of
Paulist Institute for Religious Research

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APOSTOLIC ZEAL IN A THRIVING PARISH

Thomas Shelley

TEACHERS OR MESSENGERS?

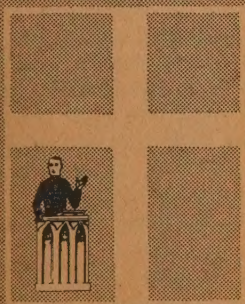
F. Somerville, S.J.

✓ INSTRUCTION ON THE CHURCH

Rev. Martin Ramsauer

Helmung p/48.

APRIL 1961, No. 157



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IT SEEMS TO ME

Requisite Preparation

As the time for the opening of the ecumenical council draws close, every Catholic should deepen his interest and prayers for its widest possible success. This is especially needed with regard to the council's approach to the problem of Christian unity.

Sincere attempts in the past have failed largely because an informed public opinion for reconciliation had not been sufficiently cultivated. Where large bodies of people have been bitterly at odds on fundamental issues, over a span of centuries, a huge preparatory task is required in order to achieve even the smallest gains.

Many American Protestants, for decades, have understood this clearly and have devoted valiant efforts to familiarize their co-religionists with the necessity of healing our divisions. Due to their labors, an increasing number of our Separated Brethren have come to see the scandal of separation, to understand some of the major obstacles to re-union and the necessity of prayer and sacrifice.

Faced with their example—and led by Pope John whose intense desire to make fruitful beginnings toward re-union is so manifest—it would be inexcusable if any Catholic were to treat the whole matter with indifference. The task of healing our divisions is enormous and delicate. Humanly speaking, a final solution will be unattainable unless Protestants, Eastern Christians, and Catholics study the question deeply and earnestly desire a solution.

True, our basic difficulties are at the level of doctrine and ultimate reconciliation must be effected in the area of religious truth. This task, in the main, will be undertaken by responsible theologians. But factors like race, language, culture, inherited prejudices—especially the fact that we and our Separated Brethren have lived apart so long—can greatly affect the climate in which the whole matter is discussed.

Catholic pulpits must unite with the Catholic press in this indispensable task of preparation.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

GUIDE, No. 157, APRIL, 1961.

Published 10 times a year (monthly except June-July, August-September when bi-monthly) by The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in the State of New York, 411 West 59th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y. Rates 1 year, \$1.00; 10¢ a copy; 5¢ a copy in bulk to Seminarians.

Apostolic Zeal in a Thriving Parish

By Thomas Shelley

A decade ago, we were one parish among 16 thousand. Today, they tell us, we're one among a hundred. The revolution all began when we got a new Pastor who challenged us, the parishioners. Nowadays, nearby parishes say we've gone haywire. If haywire means livewire, I agree. Others call it "lunatic fringe." Maybe, by comparison to what we were, it is, but at least such lunacy shows signs of life.

Before Father Dahl came, we ran the gamut of parish societies. Today, we still run the gamut, only now meetings are more than coke and joke sessions. They throb with apostolic life.

First time we heard the convert theme from the pulpit, flesh thickened by years of apathy didn't even feel a sting. Second time, the dart stuck for a second, but most of us managed to get it out before it drew blood. Next time, the pulpit microphone made lots of us leave the church with a nasty little gnawing inside.

For, Father Dahl had said, "Christ's disciples are singled out by love—'By this shall men know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Since love basically means wishing others well, we love best when we wish the spiritual well-being of others. This includes everyone—especially bad Catholics and fallen away Catholics and non-Catholics, for Christ came 'that *all men* might be saved.' We must work together to escort these people back to Christ in the Church. Else, we're not very good Christians!"

Well, we asked when the gnawing couldn't be stifled, how? Father Dahl had a *doll* of a plan—it was his pun!

First of all, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine wheels went into motion. Our parish grammar schools always handled our tykes, but since there was no Catholic High

school nearby, a well-memorized but poorly applied Catechism education was the extent of our kids' religion. With CCD know-how behind us, we plotted the equivalent of a four-year High School course of "religion to be lived." It's paid off, too, for now many of our Parish Inquiry Class lectures are spun out deftly by young grown-up graduates of the CCD program. There is a whale of a side effect too: Father Dahl is extended like Plastic Man.

Before ladling out manpower through the CCD offices, we took the parish census to tabulate our needs. "Might as well start at rock bottom," was the feeling. The Knights of Columbus Council pooled with the three Legion of Mary Praesidia, set up a block captain system, and rang every ringable doorbell in the parish—all in a 5-day period. We expected the parish to be about 28% Catholic. To our surprise, the ante was upped 10%, which was fine till we tallied the lapsed *vs.* practicing score and found that only 41% of our 38% were practicing regularly. Although we found this better than the country's average, everyone agreed it was a wound worth healing.

That was why the thickest and best blood in the parish was poured into the CCD Apostolate of Good Will, CCD's convert branch. Of course, it got some pretty thin stuff too, namely the likes of me whose only talent is lots of time and willingness to work. Anyhow, when imaginations meshed with intellects, a program came off the mental presses. In essence, it was the-Catholic-Church-is-your-friend approach.

It'll probably be least painful all around if I leave out the names and dates, and just show what exactly came off those hot presses. The program at first wasn't clear cut into "personal contact" and "mass media contact" as it is now. Much of the organization and nomenclature is from hindsight.

First, the personal contact.

After the census, many of the bell-ringers

were so thrilled with the value of the personal interview that they set up an official parish welcoming committee. Through real estate men and the local chamber of commerce records they keep their fingers on the pulse of the neighborhood come-and-go. The information these men can offer is a basket of gold nuggets for parish visitations. At first visit, the welcoming committee spreads out a great big wall-to-wall welcome carpet for Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, invites them to services, tells them of programs and activities sponsored by the parish. Through the years, only about a baker's dozen have wiped angry feet on the welcome mat.

The same group—they're a combo of Legion of Mary and K. of C. and C.F.M.—plans, advertises, sets up, conducts, and cleans up after the annual Open House. From the visitations and Open House, the Inquiry Class gets a good stock of sincere inquirers, and through the years about 700 converts.

CATHOLIC LITERATURE

Something, we all felt, had to be done about getting healthy Catholic literature into curious hands. First of all we looked into the plans other places used: donate books to the public library, ask the library to buy more Catholic books, or run our own lending library. We finally decided to buy the liveliest and most readable Catholic paperbacks and hardbacks for the library—2 a month. There's a nickel-a-week box in each school classroom to subsidize the project, a kind of literary mite box. Besides, when plenty of use goes into the new books, the library begins buying on its own.

With the book problem at least being doctored somewhat, we thought of magazine distribution. What we did was look to Carmel, California and Mrs. Olive Smith's Catholic Literature Distribution Committee. For the personnel of the plan, we invented an ingenious twist when we employed Boy Scouts and Shut-ins on either end of this apostolic see-saw.

After advertising in the parish leaflet that a collection of month-old Catholic magazines will take place—and we do it each month—the Scouts ring the bells. The loot gathered, they deliver it to various Shut-ins who have the patch-up materials and the "Free Catholic Literature" stamps. Days later, back

come the Boy Scouts to pick up the renovated magazines and cart them to special outdoor racks, or barber shops, or doctors' offices. Surprising how hard it is for people to refuse free literature, even though it's Catholic, from a kid in uniform who says "Aw, c'mon Mister!"

The Shut-ins also come through zealously in the mailing program. A yearly double-take of the census files brings out names of un-hostile fallen-aways and non-Catholics. We send them a pamphlet on some issue—handled in the Knights of Columbus handshake and logic variety—along with an invite to the no-obligation Inquiry Class. Results here have been in terms of good-will more than baptisms, we've discovered.

There's nothing like giving money to start a friendship. So, we have a kitty set aside for secular organizations that are campaigning for funds. You'd be surprised at the effect on Red Cross officials and nurses when the CCD president saunters in with "C" note from the Catholic Parish. These things have a way of getting public, too, and if you don't think it's a nice feeling to see your parish listed in the booster roster of the United Givers' Fund or Red Cross, just try it sometime. You feel holy all over!

This personal contact even has the knack of wiggling its way into very un-likely areas. A middle-aged woman, member of the Altar and Rosary Society which was launched on a "brush up your Faith" campaign, was reading a pamphlet on a rush-hour bus, when a man asked her for it. The title, "Why I am A Catholic," he claimed, caught his fancy. Some fancy! He turned out to be a hostile minister and he penned a line-by-line "refutation" of the pamphlet. Nevertheless, the woman has carried a similar pamphlet on the bus every day since, and has so far unloaded half a hundred, while crediting 6 converts to her wiles—including the bus driver!

One idea that we tried flopped with a flop that we still hear every time we pass the street corners involved. It was street preaching, *a la* Hyde Park and Frank Sheed, but without the Sheed know-how and experience. The whole thing fizzled after three listenerless experiences.

Now for the mass media.

When we got involved in the mass media, we had no intention of letting them get so "mass" as to bury us. We've succeeded so far by making sure there's enough little In-

dians around to help bear the burden that would otherwise overwhelm the Chiefs.

Father Dahl had had some press experience, and by redoing his sermons into quote-and-comment news items, he picked up a weekly spot on the religious page of the local journal. Until then, the only cue that the Church even existed in our town was the inch of print at the lower left-hand corner of page nine, advertising "Masses at 7-8-9-10-11."

With the help of the editor, Father also drew up a master sheet for news releases and a check-list of do's and don'ts, giving each of the CCD officers and the Parish Society Secretaries. Soon the "who, what, when, where, why" of every parish event wended its way onto the editor's desk. Now that we know his religious policy and his likes almost better than he does himself, the amount we let him have is just enough of a tease to keep him wanting more. For, like most editors, he's addicted to stimulating local news.

Turnabout being fair play and all that, we handle any Catholic questions the paper receives. When the editor is not looking, we even plant a question or two, to keep him thinking that religious news is high on the reader reaction indicator.

K. OF C. ASSISTANCE

Along these lines, the local K. of C. Council has a small scale variety of the Knights' national ad campaign: they supply the cash for ads three times a week which offer to "answer by mail any question readers may have about the Catholic Church." The Knights also furnish the appropriate pamphlets for inquirers, but the letter and clerical work is again the contribution of the Shut-ins.

The 12-man CCD executive board engineers our radio activity—the Secretary was a Naval radio engineer in the second world war. Before sinking his teeth into radio free-time, he canvassed the parish for part-time "hams" and located half-a-dozen. Until they could sprout their own weather wings and get their bearings, they made use of a syndicated show—the "Catholic Magazine of the Air," from the District of Columbia, published by Paulist Seminary. Now, though, they produce their own, and have a backlog of dozens.

The kind of show they run is the sim-

plest possible: tapes of CCD discussion groups, or CFM meetings, or lectures from parish notables or visitors. Once a month they comment on moral issues in the headlines. Every five weeks they do a live broadcast of a fully participated liturgical ceremony. It's all local talent, all free, all readily available, and since the same taping equipment can be used over and over, it's all quite cheap. (And all effective, too, if listener correspondence is a gauge.)

Everyone licked his chops when we decided to try TV. The station in the vicinity gave us 13 Sunday mornings—TV and radio free-time, we found, comes in doses of 13 or 26 weeks usually. The first show is still proverbial in these parts as "a miserable flop." We tried straight religious drama, and it came out neither straight, nor religious, nor dramatic; and even worse, it went only 25 minutes, which gave the control room heartburn. The line-up we had projected for the next dozen shows was quickly scrapped and, after a return to the planning board, we plotted a bevy of easy-to-manipulate interviews, panel discussions, and liturgical ceremonies. By now, we're deft enough to sprinkle dramatic interludes through a straight show, but ulcers still bleed at the thought of full-length drama.

What we're hoping to achieve by all this activity in our parish is converts. In that area, the results so far don't equal the effort, all of us admit unabashedly. Yet, the effect it is working on ourselves makes this game well worth the candle. For, apostolic activity has a way of making you anxious to put more into and get more out of the Mass. Naturally, that means liturgical living. Yes, heaven forbid, we've gone liturgical too.

DIALOGUE MASS

The noon weekday Mass and late Sunday Masses are done in dialogue: Father Dahl puts a premium on participation—a late rising. At every Mass, Offertory breads are on a tray at the church entrance, with the wine and water, so that Communicants can place their own breads in the Ciborium. At the Offertory, two men picked at random present the sacred goods at the altar railing. The Sunday dialogue Masses are also fully regaled with a lector who reads the Epistle and Gospel in English; when possible, we've used the altar boys' Dads. At low Masses, we've become avid fans of

the moving English Psalms, *a la Gelineau*.

At High Mass, the entire Congregation chants the Kyrie-Gloria-Creed-Sanctus-Benedictus-Agnus Dei. There was nothing to picking them up (another premium—we learned them on sermon time!) No one's ever known the thrill that slithers down your spine as you and hundreds like you sing—off key or on—"Mercy, Lamb of God" to the Christ you're about to receive!

Well, that's the bare outline that rolled off the hot mental presses, the personal, mass media, and liturgical activity of our parish. Not a great deal of lunacy, do you think? Indeed, we feel we're getting saner all the time. And by the way, the reason I haven't mentioned the location of our parish is that it doesn't really matter. The fact is, it could be Anytown, USA.

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Teachers or Messengers?

By F. Somerville, S.J.

The Christian religion is a *revealed* religion; it is based upon what God has made known to men, not upon what they themselves have discovered. The faith of a Christian rests upon the revelation which God has made of himself in the Old Testament and in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Revelation is something personal: God telling us about himself, what he has done for us, is doing, and going to do, and inviting us to reply with a living faith. He has spoken to men by words and deeds. In the Old Testament he spoke to individuals, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also to a whole people, choosing for this purpose messengers, like Moses, Samuel and the prophets. By his frequent interventions in their history the chosen people learned more about God and his designs than from his words. In "many and varied ways God spoke of old to our fathers" (Heb. I.I.). In the New Testament also God spoke to men. The words and actions of Jesus Christ are the words and actions of God. Jesus Christ has made known everything anyone needs to know for salvation.

God's voice which spoke in the past still reaches us today. His words are meant for all; and he has seen to it that what he has said is proclaimed to us today in His Church.

As teachers we need to be convinced of this personal aspect of revelation, because otherwise we run the danger of bringing into the class room the less appropriate method of the seminary professors who put the emphasis on the revealed truths themselves rather than on God the Revealer. The professional theologian takes the sources of revelation, Scripture and Tradition, and examines them as one does lifeless historical documents. In order to prove a scholastic thesis he draws from Scripture what texts he can find in support of his assertion and passages from the writings of the Fathers. However correct and necessary this may be in a course of theology, the teacher in the class room giving a course of religion, will keep foremost in his own mind and impress upon his pupils that it is God who speaks to us through his Church, and uses human intermediaries to hand on his message. Whilst having recourse to the findings of theologians, the catechist looks upon revelation primarily as God revealing himself, not primarily as revealed truths about God, for his aim is to drive home to the pupils that our religion is a personal religion: it is matter of God speaking to us and our reply, not just a body of truths we believe.

We will do well to look upon revelation for what it really is, viz. a *message*. God could have revealed himself to each individual personally, but he did not. He chose

certain people to be his messengers who were to hand on to others what he said, Jesus Christ being the supreme messenger, the perfect revelation of God.

Our Lord went about giving the Father's message to men. He commissioned the apostles to hand on the same message without addition or alteration. They did as they were bidden; they announced that he whom the world had long awaited was already come, that he was Jesus of Nazareth who died and rose again, who was now living and in whom was salvation. The successors of the apostles, our bishops, hand on the very same message. And for the carrying out of this responsibility they draw upon the help of priests and Catholic teachers in Catholic schools. Religion-teaching is thus the handing on of a message from God.

Since the Christian doctrine we teach is in reality a message, it should be presented in that form. This will bring about a great improvement in teaching, where the almost traditional view suggests a school-subject in which we expound a doctrine, explain technical terms and teach formulas.

NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS

The Christian message has certain characteristics which should influence the way in which we present it. In the first place, it is a good news, the name Our Lord himself gave to it. It is news, even today, for the majority of mankind has not yet heard it, and it must be confessed that very many Christians themselves have a very inadequate knowledge of what it is all about. Moreover, it is a *good* news. The fact that God so loved the world as to send his Beloved Son to save it is a tidings of great joy to all peoples.

We are telling the pupils something that is good for them and which they should be very glad to hear. But we empty it of its "good news" character if we confine ourselves to explaining doctrine or getting the catechism learned or making our religion appear to be a matter of prohibitions and commands.

Secondly, the Christian message is a spoken message, God did not write a book and send it from heaven saying: "It's all in the book, learn that and get others to learn it as well." See also St. Paul's insistence on oral transmission (Rom. 10.13-14 and 17).

Instead of respecting God's manner of

revelation, have we not made the Word of God abstract by presenting it in a series of propositions and catechism answers? Have we not turned the living God who speaks to us into a school-subject, to be learned like geography and arithmetic? To know a person one must enter into personal relations with him; catechesis should be given not so much on a notional as on a personal level: the teacher is expected to speak of God and Jesus Christ as of someone he knows personally and whom he is introducing to the pupils.

Thirdly, the Christian message is one which calls for a response. When God speaks to men, it is not for nothing; they are not to remain unheeding. When he speaks through the medium of a religion-teacher, he calls for a response from the pupils. This response is not simply an assent of the mind to the revealed truths, but a commitment of the whole person showing itself in the whole of life.

This characteristic imposes on the teacher a responsibility for presenting the Christian message in a way that will provoke this living active faith in his pupils. Yet he will not achieve this aim if he is so busy getting things learned for examination purposes or for reproduction before a diocesan inspector that he forgets the personal call from God to the pupil that is in every revealed truth.

The danger of neglecting this aspect of the Christian message becomes greater in the secondary schools where the emphasis is rightly placed upon instruction. Nevertheless, we must not forget that faith is a life-long commitment which progresses with the person's human development.

Consequently, in preparing our lessons we are to keep in mind the fact that the Christian message is one which calls for a spiritual reaction on the part of the hearers, and we are to ask ourselves how we can so present a particular truth that the pupils will make it fruitful in their daily lives.

For any big improvement in religious teaching the chief change will be in the mentality of the teacher. He will shake off that text-book mentality which most of us have; we think that if only we had the right sort of book most of our problems would be solved! He will be on his guard against excessive application of the "school-master" attitude which leads him to take the religious lesson as if religion were the

same as the teaching of profane subjects.

However, the chief requirement, following from what we have seen of the nature of revelation, is that the teacher is to look on himself as the bearer of a message. He can apply to himself in some degree the words of Our Lord: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." He should have the mentality of a messenger announcing good news.

The teacher should himself feel joy and gladness at the news he bears. This does not mean working up a forced or superficial enthusiasm in ourselves; but instead of taking the revealed truths too much for granted and as stale news, we should deepen by prayer our appreciation of the amazing fact that God should come and live among men in order to save them. We will then perhaps become like the apostles who were so filled with joy at this news that they felt impelled to tell it to others: "It is impossible for us to refrain from speaking."

The teacher will be a faith messenger. It is not his own, but God's message he is delivering. Therefore, he will let the pupil see that he is speaking not in his own name, but is echoing the Word of God. In his vocabulary he will keep as close as possible to the concrete language of the Gospel without any excessive use of arid definitions and abstractions. Moreover, being aware of his function as an intermediary he will be careful not to make himself too prominent, but to efface himself as it were behind the message.

And lastly, God wants his messengers to use their intelligence. We are to study carefully the message to see that we have understood it correctly, that we are not distorting it, or weakening it, or substituting for it here and there the opinions of men. We must also study it to distinguish the essential truths from the accessory material and thus be able to observe a due proportion in our teaching.

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Instruction on The Church

By Rev. Martin Ramsauer

We all realize to what extent the catechetical literature, which is still in use, displays an external, juridical-hierarchical concept of the Church with all its dangerous connotations.

We should always remember that this deplorable development is the result of a one-sided apologetical tendency which was more concerned with refuting errors than with explaining God's full revelation. This does not mean (as we have already stated) that apologetical questions should be excluded from religious instruction. An apologetical consideration is not wrong. What is wrong is an exclusively apologetic treatment that impedes adequate understanding.

Apologetical questions are of importance,

but they do not contain all that we have to say about the Church. They lead us to the door, but not to the treasures behind the threshold. We may come to a rational acknowledging of her historical-juridical existence, and still be very far from understanding her inner life and divine function for our salvation.

The deficiencies resulting from an exclusively apologetical orientation are being noticed with increasing clarity. Saint Paul's teaching on the Church was richer and deeper than ours. And the early catechisms contained many more wonderful truths about the Church which we hardly find even mentioned in most of our catechisms.

Not long ago the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of Pius XII laid bare the shortcomings in our teaching on the Church. The encyclical refutes (as did the catechisms of

Courtesy of Asia (which has ceased publication). Hong Kong, China. Issue of February 1960. This is the concluding section of the article.

the Counter-Reformation) the error of those who deny the visibility of the Church. But then we are warned immediately from certain misconceptions which we realized as being in the trail of an improper stress of the Church's visibility.

The Holy Father writes: "From what we have thus far written and explained . . . it is clear that we think how grievously they err who arbitrarily picture the Church as something hidden and invisible, as do they also who look upon it as a mere human institution with a certain disciplinary code and external ritual, but lacking power to communicate supernatural life."

And continuing, the Holy Father urges us to seek in our teaching a presentation which takes into account both the human and the divine element in the Church: "The Mystical Body of Christ is like Christ the Head and Exemplar of the Church, who is not complete if only his visible human nature is considered, or, if only his divine, invisible nature . . . but he is one through the union of both, and one in both. . . ." (n. 68).

These words and the foregoing considerations should guide us in our efforts toward a better presentation of our teaching on the Church. Some tried it by adding a few questions on the "Mystical Body." But this was insufficient. The shortcoming which we had to compensate was not just that we had forgotten to add a last sentence. It was rather that in teaching about the Church our "accent" was more on her human element, than on her deeper, inner, invisible reality. A mere addition, therefore, could not possibly effect a change in the whole attitude of seeing and understanding the Church.

Such a change could only be expected by approaching the Church as that reality for which she stands in our order of salvation. All the Christian revelation is directed toward our salvation. Therefore, to understand properly any part of our faith and to realize its particular meaning we must see its function within the whole order of our salvation. By this we obtain the desired catechetical "concentration"; all the many details of our Christian teaching become "one": the message of our salvation (Eph. 1:13).

This approach when applied to our teaching on the Church will make our presentation "essential"—assigning her the place which God has given her in the present order of our salvation; showing the inter-relation

of her various parts—and "balanced"—giving to the individual parts that consideration and stress which is conducive to a better understanding and realization of the whole.

There is probably no other sentence which could express as clearly and concisely the function of the Church in our salvation by her inner dependence from Christ than the one we find in Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "He (God) has subjected every single thing to his (Christ's) authority and has appointed him as universal head of the Church, which is truly his body, the complement of him who fills all the members with all graces" (1:22f.). Christ—Church—graces (sacraments)—are here shown in a mutual relationship which shall give us further help in understanding the mystery of the Church.

CONTINUED INCARNATION

In the encyclical's text we quoted above (Myst. Corp. n. 69) the Holy Father draws a parallel between Christ and the Church. A similar parallel could be made with regard to the structure of the sacraments, which in their double nature are "external signs" containing and conferring by divine institution the divine gift, "grace." But Christ and the sacraments are more than parallels, or "comparisons," helping us to understand the structure of the Church. All three: "Christ—Church—sacraments," have an inner relationship which is based on God's design for our salvation.

Salvation begins with the Incarnation, and is continued and completed through a continued incarnation. The steps or factors marking this process are: Christ—Church—sacraments; through them salvation comes from God to the individual man. This is the inner inseparable relationship these three have to each other: Christ brings salvation through the ministry of the Church by means of the sacraments.

And since they belong together for the sake of our salvation," it was God's ordination that there should also be a likeness in their individual constitution. Christ, "though by nature God . . . recognized by outward appearance as man" (Phil 2:6,7) was to set the pattern. Since through his double nature he became "the cause of eternal salvation" (Hb 5:9) a resemblance to his twofold nature is to be found in the structure of his Mystical Body, the Church, and the

sacraments, insofar as they are instruments in communicating the fruits of redemption.

The similarity between the Church's nature and that of the sacraments also sheds light on the Church's visibility. The visibility we affirm of both is some perceptible reality containing and indicating for our human nature the presence of a reality in the divine order which—invisible in itself—becomes visible by its God-given connection with the visible element.

The visible element in the Church is the human community (visibly established by the sacrament of Baptism) which has (in some analogy) the characteristic of the *sacramental sign* i.e., of "signifying" and "containing," and thus making visible the invisible union with Christ the Head and through him with the Father.

In line with this sacramental visibility (and "effectiveness")—and not merely the formulation of a positive law—we should understand the words of Saint Cyprian which we quoted at the beginning of this article: "No one can have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his Mother." And we can find the sacramental function of the visible Church also indicated in Saint John's First Epistle (1:3): "This message . . . we pass on to you, so that you too may share in our fellowship. What is it, this fellowship of ours? Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (Knox-translation; cf. A Cath. Commentary, 956a: ". . . that the readers may share 'fellowship' with the Apostles, i.e., may partake of the union that joins all in Christ, and through Christ with God.").

These "Sacramental" considerations are not of mere speculative value. They could be a valuable pastoral help to explain the inner reasons (and not merely to stress the necessity for our belonging to the Church). At the same time we shall more easily avoid the constant danger of separating the visible, human element from the inner, divine element, and of describing and explaining the Church in terms of human societies in the natural order.

In teaching the sacraments we have no particular fear that we will stress the visible elements and neglect the invisible element for which it exists. We are usually aware of the danger and we formulate our explanation accordingly. There is a definite relationship between these two parts which

is properly expressed by the word "sign": a human sign that veils and reveals a divine reality joined to it. Thus a "sacramental" consideration will help us avoid any unbalanced presentation by clearly perceiving the God-established double nature of the Church, and realizing her function for our salvation.

For our teaching on the Church this will mean that we shall have to present her not so much, (as we did formerly), as a human society in which the divine element is hardly more than some faint "halo" of divine institution and heavenly gifts, but, as a society of an essentially higher, divine order—"not of this world" (Jo. 18:36); as the family of God's children (Eph 2:19).

DIVINE EMPHASIS

Guided by God's own word we shall have to explain and to stress that we are the Church by reason of our Baptism into the union with Christ (Rom. 6:3ff.), made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) and given the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). Our goal is to be formed into the likeness of Christ, our first-born brother (Rom. 8:29) in whose union alone we are recognized and accepted by the Father (Rom. 5:2) as "fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household" (Eph. 2:19).

In a word: The emphasis in our teaching on the Church must shift back to the inner, divine element in the Church, from the rather harmful emphasis on her outer, visible, human part. We should acknowledge her—as the early catechisms did—as "the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ." "This title," says Pius XII, "is derived from and is, as it were, the fair flower of the repeated teaching of Sacred Scripture and the Holy Fathers" affirming that "we shall find no expression more noble, more sublime or more divine" than this title (Myst. Corp. n. 14).

The apologetical considerations, too, although they are by their nature more concerned with external facts, should lead beyond the establishment of historical-juridical conditions. They should make the Church stand before our mind "like a standard lifted up for the nations" (Conc. Vat. Dz. 1794), and raise further question till we find the final answer in her divine core.

Only an adequate consideration of her inner, divine reality will make her claim of necessity for our salvation truly understand-

able. It is the present order of salvation "to gather all creation . . . under one head, Christ" (Eph. 1:10) since no one comes to the Father except through him (John 14:6). This means that we have to be in living union with Christ, the Head. But in living union with the head there is only the body. i.e., the Church (cf. Col. 1:18).

To this essentially divine aspect of the Church must be added—in due subordination—the consideration of her human element. Although we are now already the children of God (1 Jo. 3:2), we are still "exiled from the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6). And in this condition it is part of our probation that our union with God in which we live from baptism (at least "radically" by virtue of the indelible seal) is hidden under the garment of the pilgrim's state. We do not see the reality itself in which we live, but we see its "sacramental sign"; the visible Church which in her visibility veils and reveals our union with Christ.

The human element must thus be seen in its God-established union with the divine element. If the outer, human element is seen too isolated from its inner divine foundation difficulties will arise. The Church's unity, sanctity, catholicity, indefectibility, infallibility, necessity for salvation, etc., can never be satisfactorily explained by a mere apologetical approach, but only as belonging to the Mystical Body of Christ. We are encouraged by the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: to see the manifestation of this living supernatural organism in all her functions and to seek from these a fuller understanding of her: ". . . we must accustom ourselves to see Christ in the Church. It is Christ who lives in the Church, who teaches, governs and sanctifies through her. It is Christ, too, who manifests himself differently in different members of his society" (n. 104).

The teaching on the Church tells us especially this: we are one with Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, children of God. These are basic truths expressed by the visible organization of the Church—and these are at the same time basic motives for the conduct of our life, constantly recalled by Holy Scripture to inspire us to live a virtuous life:

"If, then, any man is in Christ, he is a new creation" (Cor. 5:17); therefore "seek the things that are above" (Col. 3:1) and "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

. . . Renew yourselves constantly by spiritual considerations, and put on the new self, created after the image of God" (Eph. 4:1-23f.). The further applications to individual circumstances are well known. Consider for example the motivation for loving our enemies: "Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors, and thus prove yourselves children of your Father in heaven." (Mt. 5:44f.); or, for Christian chastity: "Are you not aware that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" (1 Cor. 6:19) etc.

Saint Leo in his Christmas homily has expressed most brilliantly and challengingly these consequences of our union with Christ in the Church: "Recognize, O Christian, thy dignity! And being made partaker of the divine nature, do not return to thy old wretchedness by an evil manner of life.—Be mindful of whose head and body thou art a member! Remember that being torn from the power of darkness, thou hast been born into the light and kingdom of God.—So let us put off the old man with his works, and having obtained a participation in the generation of Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh."

NEVER ALONE

The teaching on the Church makes us realize, too, that as Christians we are never isolated "individuals" before God, but are most intimately united in one Body with Christ and our fellow Christians by the power of the Spirit. Hence, the dogma of the *Communion of Saints* becomes more than a sharing in benefits only. It burdens our life, too, with responsibilities toward the other members in this body, and demands our co-operation for its health and growth. The Holy Father refers to this point explicitly, saying that Christ wished "every man to perform a work of collaboration with him in dispensing the graces of Redemption. . . . He makes use of the Church that the work begun might endure." (Myst. Corp. n. 13).

To be one with Christ also means to share in the functions of the Head. By virtue of baptism Christ has united us unto him and has given us the dignity and power to share in the priestly functions he exercises as the Head of his Body and in union with his Body (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9 and the encycl. *Mediator Dei*, esp. n. 88).

We have been raised to the dignity of God's children, a wonderful home awaits

us . . . and all this out of God's love for us, which we do not deserve. For this we want to thank God. We want to praise Him: to express our love in return, and—since we are still on our way to Him—we also want to place all our worries before Him. God has given us a way to do this in a manner most effective and most pleasing to Him: Through Christ Our Lord, in the *Liturgy*.

Thus Liturgy becomes more meaningful. It is, first of all, the "sacramentally-visible" expression of what we are: "One in Christ." Second, it is the expression of this supernatural union in its highest, i.e., in its priestly, function. There is no other more noble and more effective action in our life on earth than the participation in the Divine Worship of the Church, which is Liturgy. In the liturgical action Heaven opens, and we stay with Christ, our first-born Brother before God: adoring, praising, loving, thanking, and asking.

The teaching on the Church thus leads,

us not only to a deeper understanding of what happens visibly-invisibly in the liturgical action of the Church, but it also fills our hearts with a sincere desire to take part in this action in a most personal, active, and intimate manner.

Comparing the different chapters of our whole religious instruction we will scarcely find another chapter that is more "practical" and less "theoretical" than the teaching on the Church. How this teaching should be presented in its doctrinal content and its application to our Christian life is well summarized in the words of Saint Paul:

"Let Christ's message with all its wealth of meaning abide in you; with fullness of wisdom teach and admonish one another, and from the bottom of your hearts gratefully sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you do or say, let it always be in the name of the Lord Jesus, while you give thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3:16f.)

READING I'VE LIKED

Under the surface of American life, our people are deeply concerned about some knotty political and social issues. The continuing "cold war," the morality of modern war and the origins of the First Amendment are a few of them. Religious Pluralism, natural law and the Public Philosophy are others.

No Catholic has faced these and other issues so squarely or with such scholarship and clarity as Father John Courtney Murray. In *We Hold These Truths*, (Sheed and Ward: \$5.00) he presents his mature opinion on these questions.

A most satisfying, brief treatment of Apologetics is *Why We Believe*, by Msgr. Leon Christiani. (Vol. 107 of the Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism.) It is balanced, up-to-date, and faces the real problems on the journey to belief. Especially valuable is the treatment of various approaches to apologetics.

As ecumenical work takes stronger hold in the United States, we naturally turn to Europe where this dialogue learned much by actual experience. *The Catholic-Protestant Dialogue*, (Helicon; \$3.50) by Jean Bosc, Jean Danilou and others shows Europeans of different religious traditions actively engaged in dialogue.

GUIDE

- Official publication of the *Paulist Institute for Religious Research*.
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- Annual subscription \$1.00. Single issues 10¢. Bulk lots to seminarians at 5¢ a copy.

GUIDE

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Guide Lights

THE DEVIL THERE IS . . .

Many leading clergymen of the Church of England criticized the omission of the devil from a proposed revised catechism. They voiced their objections during the Convocation of Canterbury at Westminster. Eventually the Convocation gave approval of the new catechism with the understanding that the devil would once more be given his due.

The old form provided "a renunciation of the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." The proposed revision, drawn up by a commission to appeal to people of all ages and educational backgrounds, contains the simple euphemism to "renounce all that is wrong and fight against evil."

Canon A. E. Smith of Rochester seemed to sum up the arguments of critics to the change when he told the Convocation that he had become "rather attached to the devil and his works" and that the new language certainly wouldn't capture the imagination as the old did.

The resolution giving general approval to the catechism was unanimously adopted when the Bishop of Coventry, one of the chief members of the commission, assured members that he had made a careful note of the absence of the devil.

WIND, WATER AND BRIDGE . . .

Bishop Sheen used to relate how cleansing cream was an ingredient in one of his conversions. An actress who normally turned his program off the radio was forced to listen to it when it came on while she was removing her make-up. She became interested and was eventually received into the Church. The Bishop remarked that it was a case of grace working through grease.

In the same vein, what the sick comedians call a jocular vein, a Maryknoll missionary reports what he believes is the first recorded conversion at the drop of a hat. Father Charles Callahan was on a motorcycle trip to a mission outpost when the wind blew his hat off. An African elder retrieved it, and this was the beginning of a close friendship which led to a Baptism.

In another part of the world, in Korea, God is working through the droop of a rod rather than the drop of a hat. In Inchon, a French missionary, Pere Beaudevin, has de-

veloped an uncanny accuracy in locating water with the use of a divining rod.

One of his confreres is enthusiastic about the mission value of this strange accomplishment. He gives a for instance. "The people in one town noted for its cold attitude toward foreigners had tried many times to strike water. As a last resort, they settled on one particular spot and told the people they would hit water at 16 meters. They did—at exactly 16 meters! Now we don't have an enemy in town."

Another missionary, this one in Formosa, has different tricks up his sleeve—bridge tricks. He noted that bridge had become a favorite form of recreation among the educated. So he made the parish hall available for weekly bridge tournaments. It gives him, he says, "the opportunity to meet all these people in a friendly atmosphere."

There is a moral in all these stories. It involves imagination, talent, and friendliness. But somehow this scribe is unable to squeeze them into a Confucius Say.

GOOD WILL SUNDAY . . .

Something of the moral is captured and exemplified in what is called an Open House or Good Will Sunday. Two of these have recently come to our attention. One was held in Pittsburgh, and the other in Lafayette, La. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine sponsored the program in Pittsburgh. It consisted of a series of tours of the church and talks. It concluded with an evening Mass at which there was a descriptive commentary.

In Lafayette about fifty Protestant families accepted an invitation given to all the non-Catholics in the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima. Special commentators explained all the Masses offered. Conducted tours were given in the afternoon, and Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Tracy greeted the visitors after each tour.

THE SKY APOSTOLATE . . .

Free Catholic literature is doing a booming business at the Cleveland-Hopkins Airport. An average of 2,000 Catholic magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers are picked up each month by travelers passing a "help yourself" reading rack. The "sky apostolate," now entering its fourth year, has distributed 55,000 copies of such publications.

The work of providing this reading mate-

rial is done by 29 members of the St. Christopher Parish Men's Sodality from nearby Rocky River. They take turns making three or more trips to the airport each week to keep the rack neat and well stocked. Much of the literature is purchased by the sodalists. The remainder is donated by Catholic publishers.

COUNSELLING THE CONVERT MAKER . . .

St. Paul's College in Washington, D. C., played host to 250 seminarians from 28 religious communities for a conference on the non-Catholic apostolate. Father George Hagmaier, C.S.P., Associate Director of the Paulist Institute and co-author of *Counseling the Catholic* reiterated with hyperbole what so many in convert work have discovered. He declared that the most professional kind of advertising will not have "a fraction of the impact inherent in a close, warm, meaningful relationship between a sensitive, apostolic Catholic and his non-Catholic friends and neighbors."

The priest-psychologist also stated that the first impact of the Church's image on a non-Catholic is an important one. "It may draw the observer closer," he said, "by piquing his curiosity and arousing his compassion." On the other hand, "it may repel forever an inquirer who is jarred, insulted, shamed or confused."

INSIDE THE INSTITUTE . . .

The Paulist Institute is continuing to hold one-day workshops for priests and seminarians. In the week ending February and during March, Father McGinn and myself were engaged in four programs. One was in Cleveland at the seminary of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers. Their own seminarians and the deacons from the diocesan seminary attended. Two others were held in Plymouth at St. John's Seminary, which is the provincial seminary for all of Michigan. One day was for the priests; the other for the seminarians. About 85 priests attended. Some of them came by plane from remote parts of the State. Later in March, we conducted a similar workshop at the Columban Fathers' Seminary located at Milton, Mass.

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS . . .

The census figures released at the time of this writing reveal that the proportion of Negroes living in the South is continuing to decline. Just 52% live in the eleven states of the old Confederacy. Ten years ago the figure was 60%. In 1930 it was 71%. And in 1910 it was 81%. For those who read as they

run, this means that the proportion has dropped in fifty years in these eleven states from more than four-fifths to barely half.

Among states with a Negro population of over 100,000 in 1950, the sharpest percentage increase in that population by 1960 was in California. There the figure rose about 90%. In New Jersey the count was up 63%, and in Illinois 61%.

Nationally, the Negro population in 1960 was 18,871,381, or 10.5 of the total population. In 1950 it was 15,042,286. This represented 10% of the total. This jump from 10% to 10.5% shows a rate of increase slightly greater than that for white people.

Here's the shocker! Of this total population of nearly 19 million, only 653,217 are Catholic! As the man says, this is not much to cheer about. We might, however, promote a weak huzza by pointing out that this is an increase of 6% over last year. It is heartening also to note that one third of this increase was through conversion. There was a total of 12,248 Negro converts. By way of comparison this means that one out of every eight converts last year belonged to the Negro race.

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL . . .

The Vatican has announced that the role of the layman in the Church will be one of the main themes at the Ecumenical Council. The annual review of the Vatican says that such a discussion is necessary because of "the importance the laity has assumed in the organized life of the Church."

On the question of Protestants and the Council, the Yearbook states that "a means of contact and an open door" will be provided by the Special Secretariat for Christian Reunion. The secretariat would welcome non-Catholic inquirers both before and during the Council.

The following pamphlets would assist groups or individuals in a study of the Ecumenical Council and of the ecumenical movement in general.

Collins, Fr. Joseph F. *What Is an Ecumenical Council?*

Cullman, Oscar. *Message to Catholics and Protestants*. Grand Rapids; W. B. Eerdmans. Liguorian Press. *The Eastern Rite Churches—Catholic and Orthodox*.

Hallett, Paul H. *Ecumenical Councils*; Catholic Action Bookshop, Wichita, Kansas.

Shereghy, S.T.D., Basil. *Byzantine Rite Catholics*. Queen's Work.

Thomas, F.S.C., Brother Aurelian. *Which Rites Are Right?* Queen's Work.

Queen's Work. *What You Should Know About the Ecumenical Council*.

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6. A CATECHISM FOR INQUIRERS 35¢
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7. LIFE IN CHRIST \$1.00
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9. OUTLINES OF CATHOLIC TEACHING \$2.10
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